



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# BULLETIN OF THE CITY ART MUSEUM OF ST. LOUIS

VOLUME V

JULY, 1920

NUMBER 3



"HO TSING, THE HERMIT" CHINESE, SUNG DYNASTY  
ATTRIBUTED TO MA YUAN

CHINESE PAINTINGS OF  
THE SUNG PERIOD

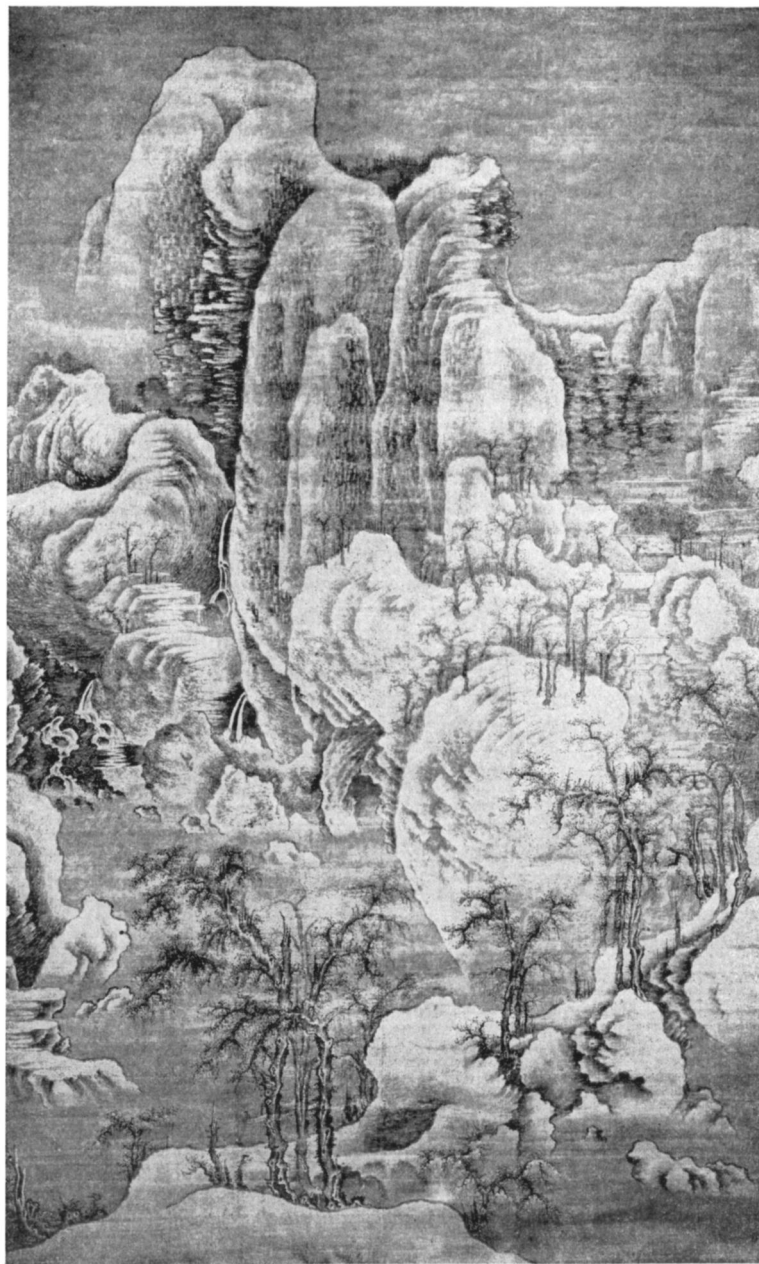
THOUGH ceramics, jades and bronzes are usually thought of when Chinese art is mentioned, there is little doubt that the highest and most profound expression of the æsthetic genius of China is to be found in paintings. The loftily conceived landscapes of the classic Sung period (960-1279 A.D.) with their profound Zen symbolism and their deep insight into the grandeur of nature, are in themselves decorative in the highest sense of the word, with an added significance which merely decorative art cannot boast. The acquisition by the Museum of a group of twenty-one Chinese paintings within recent months, is, therefore, an event of considerable interest. The collection includes pictures ascribed to various artists from the T'ang to the Ming dynasty, with no less than eleven examples attributed to Sung painters, which, if not actually executed in the Sung epoch, were certainly produced under the influence of the culture and traditions of that period. Among the Sung artists to whom examples in the Museum's collection have been attributed by virtue of technique or style, supplemented in certain instances by inscriptions and records, are Kuo Hsi, Hui-tsung, Li T'ang, Ma Ho Tse, Ma Yüan, Ma Kuei, Wang Szu Yüan, Wang Hsiao and Chen Che Chung.

One of the most renowned of the Sung painters was Kuo Hsi, to whom the landscape, "Mountain Scene After Snow," is ascribed. Kuo Hsi lived in the eleventh century and was the author of a remarkable treatise on landscape painting, in which he dwells at some length upon aerial phenomena and effects of distance. The discussion of such subjects marks

a considerable advance in Chinese art, and indicates the general trend of Sung painting from a style in which lines predominate to one in which broad monochrome washes are freely used to produce atmospheric effects. In the "Mountain Scene after Snow," mountain cliffs rise abruptly, piled one upon the other. At points their bases are shrouded in mist, without which, Kuo Hsi says in his treatise, a mountain is "like springtime without flower or grass." Straggling up toward the sheer cliffs are groups of leafless trees. At the left a stream descends the mountain side in a series of waterfalls, terminating near the bottom in a pool of quiet water where a solitary fisherman sits in his boat. High among the cliffs on the right are temple buildings.

This picture illustrates one of the earlier phases of the pictorial art in which the Sung painters have given to China her most significant æsthetic expression,—the landscape art developed under the combined influence of the Zen sect of Buddhism and the native Taoist culture. "The fundamental principle of Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism, may be summed up in the expression that *the Universe is the scripture of Zen*. . . . The face of nature was called the 'Sermon of the Inanimate.'"<sup>1</sup> The Taoist religion with its wild Rishi and hermits inhabiting the mountain solitudes, placed scarcely less emphasis upon the importance of communion with nature. In the various aspects of nature, as depicted in a painting like the "Mountain Scene After Snow," the Zen thinker saw not merely outward facts but the great universal laws which govern life. In the gnarled and twisted trees, for instance, which had resisted storms and snows and

(1) Coomaraswamy.



"MOUNTAIN SCENE AFTER SNOW" CHINESE, SUNG DYNASTY  
ATTRIBUTED TO KUO HSI

*Bulletin of the City Art Museum of St. Louis*

floods through countless seasons, he saw the image of man, his form bent and his face furrowed by the trials and conflicts of life: A struggle which serves to develop and impress character upon the features in much the same way that the elements give characteristic form to the trees. The great mountain crags piled one upon the other are emblematic of the revolutions of the Wheel of the Law, whirling the spirit of man ever nearer to the heavens, while the river of Perpetuity rushes onward, its course interrupted here and there with tranquil pools of symbolic import.

Side by side with this symbolic interpretation there was a love of the beauties of nature for their own sake which was very modern in character. Kuo Hsi in his treatise discusses this phase of the subject in a very entertaining manner: "From what motives springs the love of highminded men for landscape? In his very nature man loves to be in a garden with hills and streams, whose water makes cheerful music as it glides among the stones. What a delight does one derive from such sights as that of a fisherman engaging in his leisurely occupation in a sequestered nook, or of a woodman felling a tree in a secluded spot, or of mountain scenery with sporting monkeys and cranes? Nothing is so distasteful as the bustle and turmoil of a city, and one naturally envies the lots of sages and hermits, who always abide amidst the beauties of nature. . . . Though impatient to enjoy life amidst the luxuries of nature, most people are debarred from indulging in such pleasures. To meet this want artists have endeavored to represent landscapes so that people may be able to behold the grandeur of nature without stepping out of their houses. In this light, painting affords pleasures of a nobler

sort by removing from one the impatient desire of actually observing nature."<sup>1</sup>

The painting of "An Eagle," is ascribed to Hui-tsung who was emperor of China from 1101 to 1126 A.D. Hui-tsung was not only a painter of considerable ability, but perhaps the greatest art patron whom China has ever known. The art collection which he formed, a record of which has come down to us in the *Hsüan-ho-hua-p'u*, is said to have contained 6,396 paintings by 231 artists, beginning with the Wu dynasty (222-277 A.D.) and coming down to the Sung period. Hui-tsung is, however, even better known for the Imperial academy of painting, the *Hua-yüan*, which he established. The members of the *Hua-yüan* were given special privileges of rank and emolument, and one member was appointed daily to be in waiting night and day at the Jui-ssu-tien hall to execute instantly the orders of the Emperor. The emperor himself was particularly skillful in painting birds and flowers although he did not confine himself entirely to this class of subjects. Many incidents are related to illustrate his accurate observation and knowledge. He is said to have once painted twenty studies of ptarmigans, each characterized by some peculiar excellence. On another occasion he rejected all the pictures of a peacock made by the cleverest members of his academy because they represented the right foot of the fowl forward instead of the left! Though the reign of Hui-tsung was brilliant from an æsthetic viewpoint, it ended in disaster. The Kin Tartars conquered all of northern China, and the emperor himself was surrendered to them in 1126.

(1) Translated by Sei-ichi Taki and quoted from Ferguson's *Outlines of Chinese Art*.



"AN EAGLE"

CHINESE, SUNG DYNASTY

ATTRIBUTED TO THE EMPEROR HUI-TSUNG

*Bulletin of the City Art Museum of St. Louis*

The painting of "An Eagle" which the Museum owns, shows an accurate and intimate observation of nature, combined with the careful attention to detail which is inherent in Chinese art. The attitude is lifelike and vigorous; the head is especially strong and virile in conception. Great restraint has been shown in the introduction of landscape accessories, the meager details included,—a few rocks, a stunted tree, a bit of turbulent water—are carefully rendered but unobtrusive. The omission of all detail in the background is particularly effective in emphasizing the simple composition and in imparting a feeling of almost infinite atmospheric distance. The picture is executed almost entirely in black and white upon a paper which is now of a cool gray tone. Opaque white is freely used in painting the plumage. The picture is in an excellent state of preservation, the paper apparently resisting the destructive effects of time better than the silk upon which most Chinese pictures are painted. At the top is the signature of the emperor and the statement that this "imperial eagle picture" was painted by the brush of the emperor in the fifth year of the Cheng-ho period (i. e., 1116 A.D.) It also bears the imperial seal (the second from the left at the top) of the Hsüan-ho period (1119-1126 A. D.), which is said to have been impressed upon all the pictures in the great imperial collection.

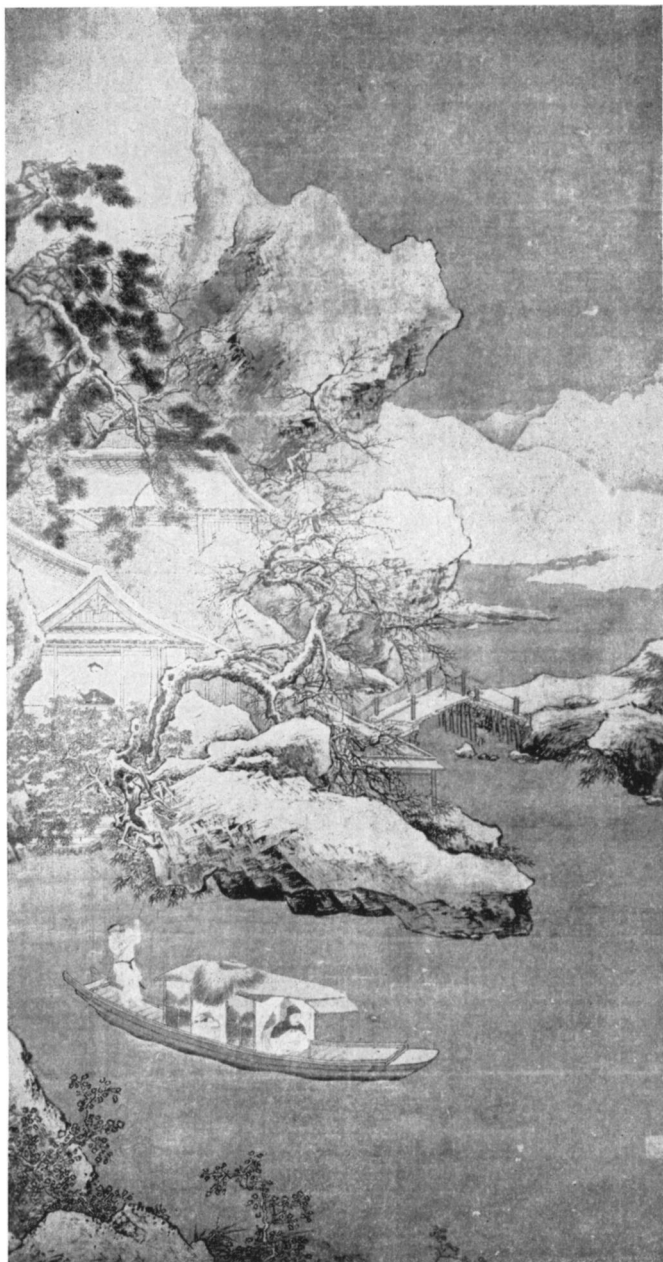
Among the many artists associated with Hui-tsong in his long and culturally brilliant reign was Li T'ang, who was most active about 1111 A. D., and who died about 1130 A.D. The painting, "In a Boat on a Snowy Night," illustrated on page thirty-one, has been attributed to the brush of this artist. It shows just the sort of wild mountain retreat that a Zenist

would choose, where, undisturbed, he might come into contact with the wilder and more somber aspects of nature. The snow-covered crags, storm-twisted trees and lowering sky reveal the fine feeling of the painter for the moods of nature. "There is no longer any element of dread or discomfort in the Sung artists' and poets' feeling for nature, storms and rain and snow, nothing of the horror of mountains which survived until nearly a century ago in cultivated Europeans."<sup>1</sup>

The incident here depicted is the visit of Wong Tze Yu of the Eastern Tsin Dynasty to his friend the hermit Tang An Tao, during a snow-storm at night. A painting of the same subject, by Liu Sung Yen (circa 1190 A.D.), is illustrated in the catalogue of Mr. P'ang Lai Ch'en's collection.

The painting, "Ho Tsing, the Hermit, Viewing the Hawthorn Blossoms," illustrated on the front cover of the Bulletin, is ascribed to Ma Yüan, one of the greatest of the Sung landscape painters, who flourished toward the end of the twelfth century. The greater number of Ma Yüan's pictures were inspired by the romantic landscape bordering the picturesque mountain-enclosed lake near the southern city of Hangchow which had become in 1138 the Sung capital, following the conquest of northern China by the Kin Tartars. In the fine old city of Hangchow, Sung culture was to reach its highest and most magnificent development before the final and subversive conquest of the Sung emperors by the Mongols under Kublai Khan in 1279. Some idea of the splendor of this culture may be gleaned from the few remaining Sung paintings ascribed to men

(1) Binyon.



"IN A BOAT ON A SNOWY NIGHT"  
CHINESE, SUNG DYNASTY  
ATTRIBUTED TO LI T'ANG





SILVER CAMEL HT. 5½ IN.  
CHINESE, T'ANG DYNASTY



EARTHENWARE HORSE HT. 20 IN.  
CHINESE, T'ANG DYNASTY

like Ma Yüan. The painting shown, "Ho Tsing, the Hermit, Viewing the Hawthorn Blossoms," is marked both by loftiness of conception and simplicity of design. The artist has confined himself largely to monochrome, yet his mellow, finely modulated values are eloquently suggestive of color. The composition is remarkable for the depth of its atmosphere, its design and the simplicity of its elements. The atmospheric treatment is strikingly modern in feeling, it has a depth and an intimacy which were, indeed, unparalleled in Western art until the period of the Barbizon school, the chief distinction of which Ma Yüan anticipated by a period of something like six centuries. The picture bears the seals of the Yen family of Fen Ni, and of the K'ien Shan T'ang collection. It is also mentioned in the "Painting List" compiled during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Ma Yüan's name has been written at the left, near the bottom of the picture. All four of the paintings illustrated are from the collection of Mr. P'ang Lai Ch'en of Chekiang.

#### CHINESE TOMB FIGURES OF THE T'ANG PERIOD

THE Museum has recently acquired a number of statuettes of men and animals which were excavated from Chinese tombs of the T'ang period (617-907 A.D.). According to the belief of the Chinese, the tomb became the dwelling of the spirit after death. In order, therefore, that the deceased might have all the comforts which he had enjoyed during life, it was customary to place in the tomb of the honored dead models of everything he had found useful during his earthly existence. The tomb of a person of rank and wealth might contain models of farm implements, kitchen utensils, domestic animals, servants, priests, and relatives, as well as certain images of grotesque monsters which were supposed to be efficacious in warding off evil spirits. There is reason to believe that this custom supplanted, before the historic era, an earlier one of burying alive with the deceased his servants, retainers and domestic animals. That the ancient Chinese were